New Mexico Highlands University
Board of Regents Regular (Virtual) Meeting
September 30, 2025

The New Mexico Highlands University Board of Regents held a regular virtual meeting on September 30, 2025. The meeting was livestreamed via Zoom Platform. Notice of the meeting was posted in the Rogers Administration Building, posted on the NMHU Board of Regents website, and sent to local media as required. The university made every effort to accommodate members of the public as stated in the meeting announcement. Members of the public were able to access the livestream through the following Zoom link: https://nmhu.zoom.us/j/99373471046.

Call to Order
Chairman Frank Sanchez called the meeting to order at 9:02 AM.

Roll Call
Board Members present: Dr. Frank Sanchez, Ms. Elaine Luna, and Mr. Gary Tripp
Board Members not present: Mr. Robert Lucero

Administrative Personnel Present
Dr. Neil Woolf, President; Stephanie Gonzales, CPA/Vice President for Finance and Administration; Dr. Brandon Kempner, Chief of Staff; Dr. Kimberly Blea, Vice President for Student Affairs; Dave Lepre, Vice President for University Relations; Mr. Scott Noble, Athletic Director

Others Present
Doajo Hicks, NMHU Legal Counsel; Jennifer Lindline, Faculty Senate Chair; Amalinda Arguello, Executive Administrative Assistant to the Board of Regents. Faculty, staff, students, and community members also participated in the meeting.

Compliance with Meeting Notice Requirements
Chairman Sanchez stated that in accordance with the Open Meetings Act, the notice and agenda with the meeting date, time, and place for the September 30, 2025, meeting were posted in a timely fashion and in compliance with the NMHU Board of Regents Open Meetings Act.

Approval of the September 30, 2025, Meeting Agenda – Action Item
Motion: Regent Tripp
Second: Regent Luna
Vote: Unanimous approval (3-0) – Motion carried

Public Comment
No public comments were submitted, and no participants raised their hands to speak.

Welcome and Introduction of New General Counsel – Mr. Doajo Hicks
Chairman Sanchez introduced Mr. Doajo Hicks, attending his first Board of Regents meeting as the new General Counsel. Mr. Hicks had participated in recent campus events, including the homecoming parade and game, prior to his official start. He expressed enthusiasm about joining the university and noted that he is in his second week on campus. Mr. Hicks shared that he has long-standing family ties to New Mexico, with multiple family members having graduated from Highlands.

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President Woolf emphasized that Mr. Hicks will be responsible for re-establishing the policy council, creating a shared-governance–based policy development process, and formalizing campus procedures in alignment with institutional goals. This effort is expected to support both short-term needs and long-term growth. President Woolf also noted that Mr. Hicks' presence will support daily operations and strengthen professional relationships across campus.

Approval of Tuition for NMHU Asynchronous Doctoral Programs – Provost Brown
Provost Dr. Dann Brown presented a proposal to establish tuition for NMHU's asynchronous online doctoral programs, beginning with the new Doctor of Nurse Practitioner (DNP) program. Dr. Brown noted that this is Highlands' first doctoral offering and that additional programs, including the EdD and Doctorate of Social Work, are in development. He stressed the importance of establishing a tuition structure that is competitive, sustainable, and aligned with degree requirements.

Dr. Brown recommended a tuition rate of $875 per credit hour, with an estimated program total of $35,875. He compared this to the University of New Mexico's DNP programs, which range from approximately $45,000 to $49,700 due to additional university and Health Sciences Center fees. Highlands' proposed program would not include such fees, making it more affordable and accessible, especially for students in rural areas – a core institutional priority.

Dr. Brown noted that initial funding for the program came through state RPSP allocations and that the program is designed to be revenue-positive while maintaining affordability. This tuition decision represents the first step in establishing a structured tuition model for all forthcoming doctoral programs.

Chairman Sanchez moved to approve the item.

Motion: Regent Tripp
Second: Regent Luna
Vote: Unanimous approval (3-0) – Motion carried

2025 Board of Regents Workshop Dates
The Board revisited dates for the 2025 Regents workshop and agreed that the end of October appeared promising. President Woolf confirmed that late-month dates, particularly the Thursday and Friday before the November 1 Matanza, worked well. The President also emphasized that the Matanza event offers valuable opportunities for community and leadership engagement. Amalinda will follow up to coordinate and confirm availability of all Regents.

Adjournment
There being no further business, Chairman Sanchez moved to adjourn the meeting.
Motion: Regent Luna
Second: Regent Tripp
Vote: Unanimous approval (3-0) – Motion carried

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:42 AM.

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Chairman
NMHU Board of Regents

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Secretary/Treasurer
NMHU Board of Regents

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